



LOUISE M. SLAUGHTER
CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
25TH DISTRICT, NEW YORK

June 24, 2015

The Honorable Robert A. McDonald
Secretary of Veterans Affairs
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary McDonald:

I write today to express my concern over reports that your subcommittee may be planning to divert funding from existing Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) construction projects around the country to a wildly over budget VA hospital in Denver. For some time I have been concerned about this possibility, and a recent Washington Post article (attached) indicated that this is being considered as a possible resolution. In addition, I seriously question the wisdom of allowing the VA to be in charge of construction projects. Rather than taking the lead building hospitals and other infrastructure, the VA should defer to the GSA regarding construction so the VA can focus on meeting the health care needs of the men and women who have so bravely served our nation.

As you are aware, I have long fought to build a new Community Based Outpatient Clinic for the deserving veterans living in the Rochester, NY region. This project is now fully funded and yet we have experienced multiple setbacks and delays due to internal miscommunication and poor management at the VA. Report language I requested in the recent military construction appropriations bill will help the VA address some of the problems experienced to date. It is critical that this project move forward expeditiously.

On behalf of all veterans in New York State, I urge you not to divert funding from the Rochester Community Based Outpatient Clinic. The reality is that the more than 70,000 veterans in the greater Rochester area are already forced to travel long distances to reach a VA hospital and deserve access to the services this new regional facility will provide. Diverting funds from the Rochester veterans' clinic to fund an out of state VA hospital that is three times over budget and nearing a price tag of two billion dollars is unacceptable.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to working with you to find an appropriate outcome.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Louise M. Slaughter".

Louise M. Slaughter
Member of Congress